

Legislative Issue Brief – Federal Assistance for Wastewater Re-Use at EcoComplex



Catawba County Board of Commissioner's Legislative Goal

Support Federal assistance in the funding of a regional wastewater re-use system which will benefit the Catawba County EcoComplex

Background

Catawba County is requesting Federal assistance in developing and constructing a regional wastewater re-use system (also known as a wastewater recycling or wastewater reclamation system). The request is for \$3 million in State and Tribal Assistance Grant funding and \$3 million in Department of Energy funding. The system will travel from the City of Hickory's Henry Fork Wastewater Treatment Plant to Catawba County's EcoComplex in an effort to conserve the region's water and strengthen the County's economy by creating a sustainable infrastructure for Catawba County Government and private business while introducing alternative energy research to the County.

The reclaimed wastewater will be used to irrigate nonfood crops that will be employed in Appalachian State University's biodiesel research facility (which is using the re-used wastewater to grow crops that will produce 104,000 gallons of biodiesel a year), Catawba Valley Community College and North Carolina State University's turf research project, and in the County's green energy producing bio-reactor landfill and wood-fired steam renewable energy facility. In addition to using the water for research and county operations, the re-use water will be utilized to replace potable water currently used by private businesses for their operations (e.g. G&G Lumber Inc. and Pallet-One Inc.). Lastly, the use of wastewater will help improve the quality of water in the Catawba River Basin by lowering discharge levels from the City of Hickory's Henry Fork Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The County's ability to receive Federal assistance on the wastewater re-use system will affect the pace in which this project can begin to help both Catawba County and the whole region. To date, Catawba County has invested approximately \$1.2 million in conducting detailed engineering evaluations of the cost to expand and rehabilitate the existing composting facility, as well as construct the new drying and green energy facility. Thirty percent of the design for the facility has been completed.

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